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ROBERT HARLEY AS SECRETARY
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ROBERT HARLEY AS SECRETARY OF STATE

It has now been over twenty years since I. S. Leadham in the bibliographical appendix of the *Political History of England* (1702-1760), volume IX, wrote, "Harley's biography with an adequate use of the original MSS is still to be written." Yet since the publication of this statement the only book devoted exclusively to Robert Harley has been an Oxford undergraduate's thesis, the Stanhope prize essay of Mr. O. B. Miller (1925).

Harley, however, has not suffered as much neglect as this fact might indicate. New titles may not have appeared under his name in the card catalogues, but much has been done in recent years to rescue his reputation from the scrap heap to which it had been relegated by the hostility of contemporary Whig historians, the malice of the Duchess of Marlborough, the sneer of Macaulay, and even the prejudice of Tory writers who were anxious to glorify Bolingbroke. Two volumes which have perhaps done most to justify and clarify Harley's work have been W. T. Morgan's *English Political Parties and Leaders in the Reign of Queen Anne 1702-1710*, and Keith Feiling's *History of the Tory Party 1640-1714*. These authors have examined the political career of Harley and both have redressed the balance of opinion which hitherto weighed heavily against him, by calling in the testimony of new materials. As a result, the Harley who emerges from their pages is the statesman who attempted to teach the Tories the significance of the Revolution of 1688, and to make "moderation," and "church and crown" the bases of English conservatism.

Since Harley's political maneuvers have been carefully studied, and since considerable work has been devoted to the period of his prime-ministership (1710-1714), we shall direct our attention to that central, but neglected, portion of his active life, the period of his secretaryship of state (1704-1708). Even in this restricted field we must omit an account of his varied parliamentary activities and of his valiant effort to form and hold together a moderate *bloc* in support of Marlborough and Godolphin, and examine only his management of the secretary's office, his skillful employment of intelligence, and the important role he played in bringing about the union with Scotland.

Harley's appointment as secretary of state in 1704 marked the final breach between Godolphin and the extreme Tories who had been in power since Queen Anne's accession. For that reason and because of

Harley's reputation in the house of commons, the appointment was a popular one.¹ It also formed an open acknowledgment of the already existing cooperation between Marlborough, Godolphin, and Harley, which the public had recently recognized by dubbing them "the Triumvirate." Perhaps the circumstances that Harley's selection seemed based on political motives, that his field of operations had been limited almost exclusively to the parliamentary battleground, and that unpleasant disclosures were made during the trial of one of his clerks, William Greg, in 1707, have conspired to make historians overlook his official life, or to dismiss it as inefficient. We must consider whether his conduct of the office warrants this conclusion.

When Harley became northern secretary there were but two secretaries of state. The office, however, was considered as a unit, and its division into a northern and southern province was an arrangement made by the sovereign for the sake of convenience in dealing with foreign correspondence.² During the seventeenth century the southern department had been the province of the senior secretary. This department included France, Switzerland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey, and a general supervision of Irish and Colonial affairs.³ The northern secretary, on the other hand, was in charge of relations with the German states, Holland, Poland, Russia, and the Scandinavian countries, and

¹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part IV, The Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland* (London, 1897), IV (cited hereafter as *Portland MSS*, IV), 86. Sir Richard Cocks to Lord Berkeley, May 27, 1704: "I sent a letter of congratulation to Mr. Secretary Harley and indeed without a compliment I believe most people in the Protestant interest are pleased with his preferment."

A moderate Tory follower of Harley expressed himself as follows: "When Lord Nottingham laid down [his seals of office] . . . the Whigs upon it grew more insolent than they were before, and said all things were to come into their hands again, but when I heard you had that place I was at ease." *Ibid.*, IV, 85.

James Vernon's comment to the Duke of Shrewsbury was: "He has certainly those qualities which give him exceedingly the preference to any I have heard spoken of." *Letters Illustrative of the Reign of William III from 1696 to 1708 Addressed to the Duke of Shrewsbury* . . . by J. Vernon, *Secretary of State*, edited by G. P. R. James. 3 vols. (London, 1841), III, 259.

² Contemporary accounts of the secretary's office, along with other information on the customs, government, geography, etc., of Great Britain may be found in the series of volumes published first by Edward, and later by John, Chamberlayne between 1669 and 1755. The first twenty-two editions were entitled *Angliae Notitia; or the Present State of England*. In 1708 the name was changed to *Magnae Britanniae Notitia; or the Present State of Great Britain*. Harley knew John Chamberlayne, who frequently appealed to him for advice, criticism, and books (*Portland MSS*, IV, 411, 429).

The standard modern work on the subject is Florence M. Grier Evans (Mrs. C. S. S. Higham), *The Principal Secretary of State. A Survey of the Office from 1558 to 1680* (Manchester, 1923). Mr. Mark Thomson has continued the study of the office to 1782. His book, *The Secretaries of State 1681-1782* (Oxford, 1932), was published after this study was completed, but I am indebted to him for several valuable suggestions.

Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 132: "There is no sign of these actual names [northern and southern] being in use in Charles II's reign."

³ Although in Anne's reign the southern secretary was nominally in charge of colonial affairs, he exercised no strict supervision, as colonial matters were under the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations (commonly called the Board of Trade), established by William III in 1696. It consisted of eight paid members, and the great officers of state (*ex officio*). The office of Colonial Secretary was not created until 1768. See O. M. Dickerson, *American Colonial Government. A Study of the Board of Trade* (Cleveland, 1912); W. T. Root, "The Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1675-1696," *American Historical Review*, XXIII, 20-42 (1917), and M. Thomson, *The Secretaries of State*, pp. 29-65.

had a general responsibility for correspondence with Scotland. "In all matters of home concern," wrote Chamberlayne, "both secretaries do equally and indistinctly receive and despatch whatsoever is brought to them, be it for the Church, the Militia, or Private Grants, Pardons, etc."⁴

During Harley's tenure of office a decided shift in importance from the southern to the northern province became apparent, for in 1706 when Sir Charles Hedges, the senior secretary, was removed, Harley did not advance to his province but retained his own northern office. The following reasons account, perhaps, for this new orientation. In the first place the war with France cut off correspondence with that court, and the most important foreign work now lay in keeping the members of the Grand Alliance true to their engagements and on guard against the wiles of Louis XIV. Nearly all of them were, of course, within the boundaries of the northern province. In the second place, also because of the war, the Scandinavian countries assumed a new significance, especially since the brilliant and erratic Charles XII of Sweden kept the north in a ferment and the allies in continual dread lest he make peace and join France. Russia, too, was coming into the orbit of English diplomacy, and the first permanent English embassy was established there during Harley's secretaryship.⁵ Finally, Hanover lay in this province, and from the passage of the Act of Settlement (1701) until the death of Queen Anne it was of cardinal importance to each ministry to see that its actions were favorably represented at Hanover, and that continuous efforts "to embroil the two courts" should be thwarted. Harley, the prime mover of that act, naturally took especial interest in this duty.

By custom the two secretaries had lodgings assigned to them in all the residences of the sovereign, and their offices were in adjoining rooms at the Cockpit, in Whitehall. The income of the secretary was considerable, being derived from several sources. Harley's predecessor, the Earl of Nottingham, estimated his gross annual return at about £8,000, with a possible net income of £6,000.⁶ As Harley spent considerably more on secret service he probably cleared less.

⁴ Chamberlayne, *Present State* (1708), p. 106.

⁵ See J. F. Chance, *Notes on the Diplomatic Relations of England with the North of Europe. List of Diplomatic Representatives and Agents in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and of those Countries in England 1689-1762*, edited by C. H. Firth (Oxford, 1913), p. 35.

⁶ Miss Pearl Finch, *History of Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland*, 2 vols. (London, 1901), I, 194, quotes (in abbreviated form) from a paper of the Earl of Nottingham. It is called "T. Armstrong's account of the profits and expenses of the office from the 22 of May 1702 to the 22 of April 1704." The receipts for the two years are given as £16,279-14-8; the expenses as £4,191-0-2 (evidently an error for £4,191-2-0); profits were £12,088-12-8. The items of expense show that a secretary was expected to outfit and equip his office even to the extent of mops, scuttles, candles, and coal. To judge from this account, and from records of war-

In Queen Anne's time each secretary of state employed two under-secretaries, five or six clerks of the office, two doorkeepers, and an irregular number of messengers, decipherers, secret agents, and gazetteers.⁷ Harley chose as his undersecretaries two men of ability and education, Erasmus Lewis and Richard Warre. In selecting them he displayed the same flair for discovering talent that marked his use of such men as Defoe, Toland, Prior, and later, Swift. Lewis, because of his literary reputation, his early acquaintance with Harley, and his training under such diplomats as George Stepney and the Earl of Manchester, was the more prominent and personal of Harley's secretaries.⁸ He was in close touch with foreign correspondence, and with the political intrigues of his master, whereas Warre represented the continuity principle, for he had seen service with various secretaries of state for over a decade and was well trained in office routine. He devoted his attention largely to domestic affairs and to the examination of prisoners, spies, and malefactors.⁹

Harley's clerks were William Jones, David Eger, Tracy Pouncefort, Nicholas Mann, and William Greg.¹⁰ Of these men little is known—with the exception of Greg, whose unfortunate attempt to sell state secrets in 1707 brought him to disgrace and death. The clerks of the office received pitifully inadequate wages, and their hours of work were long and irregular. Office routine was carried on at a health-destroying pace, and references to the lateness of the hour occur frequently in Harley's letters to the foreign envoys.¹¹ The same point was brought out very clearly when Greg was examined. From his testimony it

rants contained in *The Thirtieth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (London, 1869), pp. 306-503, the secretary's regular emoluments were:

(a) Patent salary	£ 100	
(b) Pension allowance	1,850	
(c) Board wages	730	
(d) Secret service	2,000	(£3,000 for senior secretary)
	<u>£4,680</u>	

There were fines, fees, and perquisites which increased this amount.

⁷ Chamberlayne, *Present State* (1707), p. 513. At one time the Signet, Paper, and Post Offices were directly under the secretary, but by 1700 these had either become sinecures or branched off into separate and useful existence. The four clerks of the Signet under Harley were Nicholas Morris, John Gauntlett, William Cooke, and Sir William Trumbull. For the Post Office, see J. C. Hammeon, *History of the British Post Office* (Cambridge, Mass., 1912). Thomson thinks that Harley and Hedges tried to economize on the *Gazette* and entrusted it to the underclerks (*Secretaries of State*, p. 149).

⁸ Swift called Lewis "a cunning shaver very much in Harley's favour," and said that Harley had brought him to court from a Welsh schoolhouse. Lewis, however, had been in Berlin with Stepney (1698) and in Paris with the Earl of Manchester (1700-01).

⁹ The correspondence of Harley's undersecretaries may be found in the Public Record Office, State Papers (Domestic) 44/146, pp. 33-61.

¹⁰ Chamberlayne, *Present State* (1707), p. 513. The undersecretaries and clerks of the signet are designated as "Esquire," whereas the clerks are called "Gent." This fact and the difference in salaries indicate that the former belonged to a higher social class. Jones and Eger remained with Boyle, Harley's successor, which may indicate their usefulness and the non-political aspect of the office.

¹¹ For example, Harley to Stanhope, Public Record Office, State Papers (Holland), 140/73. "It is too late now, being past twelve at night to expect letters from your side."

appeared that it was not only debt, but the "perfect drudgery of the office" which led him to attempt his desperate means of escape. His statement to the examining committee throws light on the procedure within the office.

The business [he said] seldom began till about eleven or twelve at night, and they stayed till two or three or later, though sometimes not above two letters to despatch, and he thought himself happiest who could get away soonest. The method was, first the letters were taken in shorthand [i.e., from the secretary], afterwards wrote fair, then sent to Mr. Secretary's house to be signed and after returned to the office to be entered, so they were obliged to stay till four o'clock in the morning.¹²

Greg's trial showed the faults of office routine rather than the improvements Harley made in it. Especially did it demonstrate the carelessness with which relatively important matters were handled within the office. For example, when the war, and especially the battle of Blenheim, resulted in the capture of important French officers, their correspondence to and from France passed through Harley's office. These letters came under a general cover to Lewis, who would throw them on a table and leave the perusal of them to Mann and Greg. If they found anything of a suspicious nature, they were to copy it and bring it to Harley's attention; if nothing seemed amiss, they could seal the package and send it on. Greg once protested that "this was not a business fit for an underclerk," and he used this means to get in communication with Chamillart, head of the French secret service. Greg's trial also brought out the fact that the foreign entry and despatch books were kept in an extremely careless fashion. These whitish, skin-bound volumes, resembling modern ledgers, were deposited in a press, or cupboard, the doors of which often remained open, or if they were closed, the key reposed handily in the lock. Anyone with sufficient curiosity or boldness to pass the doorkeepers could have easily gained access to them.¹³

Having such a curiosity, we may open these books for a moment,

¹² William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England*, 30 vols. (London, 1806-1820), vol. VI, 674.

¹³ Mr. Thomson gives a clear account of the foreign duties of the secretary (*Secretaries of State*, pp. 90-104), in which he discusses types of instructions and letters. Generally speaking, the entry books refer to the copies of instructions sent by the secretary to the envoys. Despatch books contain copies of letters and papers sent to the secretary. A fairly complete set for Harley's period is in the Public Record Office, London. Not all foreign correspondence is there, however, for many originals are in private collections, in the British Museum, and elsewhere. Materials of this sort are catalogued in F. G. Davenport's *Materials for English Diplomatic History, 1509-1783, Calendared in the Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, with Reference to Similar Material in the British Museum* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, Eighteenth Report, London, 1917). Especially valuable is *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789*, edited for the Royal Historical Society by D. B. Horn (London, 1932). "Camden Society Publications," third series, vol. XLVI. This contains a complete list of English envoys and ambassadors, and indicates where their correspondence may be found. For a complete list of secretarial correspondence in the Public Record Office, see *List of Volumes of State Papers, Foreign, Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1547-1782* (London, 1904).

not to discover any diplomatic secrets, but to see if Harley's personality is evident between the lines of these official messages which he despatched to the foreign envoys.¹⁴ In this search at least three of Harley's characteristics will be found. One is a desire to discover new historical—one might almost say sociological—data, and, with this, a curiosity regarding manuscripts which might enlarge an already magnificent collection. Next, there is the tendency toward kindly flattery, by which he called out the best efforts of the envoys. Last, one gains a general impression of his ability to understand the situations which confronted the various representatives of England in foreign courts.

The first characteristic is well illustrated in Harley's relations with the envoy to the newest country to come within the northern province, namely, Russia. Peter's visit to Europe and England (1698) and the northern war, aroused England's interest in Russian affairs, especially since the tobacco trade seemed in danger of collapsing. As a result of these facts, and in order to apologize for an insult which had been offered to the Russian ambassador in London, Charles Whitworth, then a young "charge d'affaires" at Vienna, was sent, in 1704, to Russia as envoy.¹⁵ Harley took a particular interest in the experiences and difficulties faced by this young adventurer, who was later destined to become one of England's outstanding diplomats. Soon after Whitworth arrived at his destination, Harley sent him some helpful hints, which betray his curiosity and historical lore. He wrote:

I shall expect in a little time to hear from you how far the manners of Europe do obtain where you are, and what progress his present Majesty makes in cultivating his army, his people, his government, and the trade of his country from what he and his great men saw in their travels abroad. You will have leisure enough to make your observations upon all particulars and compare them with the accounts delivered by Mr. Fletcher in Queen Elizabeth's time, and Mr. Marvail who went with Lord Carlisle in King Charles II's reign, not to mention the famous Latin account of John Basilowitz. And you will permit me to send you hereafter some particular questions, specially as to their naval power, what nations are employed as commanders, and the number and conditions of Her Majesty's subjects in the Czar's service.¹⁶

A typical example of Harley's keen desire to enlarge his manuscript

¹⁴ Without visiting the Public Record Office, one may see a sample of Harley's official correspondence in the letters to and from James Vernon, the Danish envoy, in *Historical Manuscripts Commission, The Manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Portland*, vol. IX (London, 1923), pp. 167-253 (cited hereafter as *Portland MSS*, IX).

¹⁵ See *British Diplomatic Representatives*, pp. 110-11, for full bibliography. Whitworth's accounts of his preparations, his journey, and of his stay in Russia are reprinted in the Russian historical journal, *Sbornik*, vols. XXXIX, L, LXI. His letters are in the British Museum, Additional MSS, 37,352-4. They make fascinating reading, as Erasmus Lewis found: "I have before me your letters to the Secretary . . . which are so entertaining, the deciphering is not tedious" (Add. MSS, 37,352, fol. 397). On July 7, 1704, Lewis wrote Whitworth: "I have already ordered the embellishers to begin the flourishing of His Czarist Majesty's titles, for the Czar and the Eastern Princes delight in gilt letters" (*Ibid.*, 37,352, fol. 241).

¹⁶ B. M. Add. MSS, 37,354, April 27, 1705.

collection may be cited from his correspondence with Dr. John Robinson, the envoy to Sweden and Poland:

Having so short a letter to write you upon public matters . . . pray give me leave to hint to you a particular thing that relates to the Commonwealth of Learning, I mean if these disturbances in Saxony have brought any rare manuscripts to light. I know you are so great a judge of these matters as well as a lover of learning that you will excuse the trouble I give you in telling you I would be at any reasonable charge for purchasing such as you should think worth it.¹⁷

Harley always used flattery well. He cultivated the habit in the game of politics and in his efforts to stand in well with members of opposing parties. He also used it to advantage in his secretarial work, for he found that the envoys responded better to a few words of praise than to peremptory orders. For example, to the earnest young Whitworth he wrote:

I know you have no very easy province to execute. . . . That sort of government and the manners of the people are as different from our customs as their weather is from our climate. You may therefore receive this satisfaction that your friends here are sensible of the hardships you undergo and at the same time we see that you adorn the service. . . . You observe the true English spirit.¹⁸

Should George Stepney, envoy at Vienna, suffer from the intrigues and delays of the Austrian court, Harley would say: "Do not let the little cavils of any warm angry person discompose you, considering your services are approved by those who are the proper judges of your merit"; or, in another letter, he would flatter Stepney's despatches and add, ". . . they deserve to be preserved to posterity," or, "it is plain you consult the spirit of the Queen and the genius of England in all you do."¹⁹ Similar touches of kindness and consideration might be produced from the letters to the other representatives. Two veteran envoys, Stepney, at Vienna, and Stanhope, at the Hague, were forced to return to England because of ill health during the period of Harley's secretaryship. He was particularly helpful to them, and to the new men who took their places.²⁰

¹⁷ P. R. O., S. P. (Sweden), 104/154, April 29, 1707.

¹⁸ B. M. Add. MSS, 37,354, fol. 326.

¹⁹ B. M. Add. MSS, 7,059.

²⁰ Alexander Stanhope was the envoy to the United Provinces from April, 1700, until September, 1706. He had been envoy to Spain (1689-99). George Stepney came to the Hague from Vienna to replace him but was taken ill within the year. Stanhope's secretary, James Dayrolle, was left in charge of affairs until 1712, though he remained subordinate to special envoys and ambassadors like Marlborough and Halifax. For Stanhope, see *British Diplomatic Representatives*, pp. 127, 156-58; for Stepney, who was a man of very wide diplomatic experience, and envoy to Vienna, 1701-06, see *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 44, 54-56, 60-64, 66, 86, 102, 140, 159.

The secretary of state did not choose the envoys with whom he corresponded, who were for the most part career diplomats. When, however, Harley became chief minister (1710-14) he advanced several of the envoys with whom he came in contact as secretary, especially the Reverend John Robinson, envoy to Sweden, whom he made Bishop of Bristol, and later, of London, and Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby, envoy to Prussia, who was created Earl of Strafford and made ambassador to the Netherlands (1711).

As vexatious incidents naturally arose out of the commercial, naval, and military rivalry of the maritime powers, Harley had also to exercise his qualities of tact and flattery in keeping Dutch officials in a pleasant frame of mind, and loyal to the Grand Alliance. Thus, for example, in his correspondence with Buys, the grand pensionary of Holland, he rarely closed a letter without the formula, "your friends and servants here meet . . . to drink your health," and he even consulted history for his compliments, as in the following letter. He wrote:

I have sent your letter to the Lord Treasurer, who I doubt not will be extremely pleased to find you so fully resolved in stemming the current of French artifice, and the ill humors at home. But this I did always presage from the ability, prudence, the courage, and from the dexterity and integrity of Mons. Buys. You are born to preserve your country, and I cannot but take notice that I find in our records that Paul Buys . . . came to England with four more great men in the year 1575, as ambassador for freeing that country from the yoke of Spain. And I hope it is reserved for you, Sir, to deliver them from the terror of France, always remembering whose maxim it was,

*Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.*²¹

It is impossible, in this connection, to enter into a detailed study of the foreign policy or diplomacy of Harley. He was secretary of state during such a brief portion of the Spanish Succession war that, in order to fit his segment into its proper niche, it would be necessary to give description of the whole intricate diplomacy of the period. Besides, Marlborough was the focal point of all diplomatic maneuvers; and the secretaries tended merely to carry out his instructions.²²

Generally speaking, Marlborough kept the secretaries of state in touch with his plans, for he wrote them three or four times a week to inform them of his actions in the diplomatic and military fields, but it should be noted that after he and Godolphin became suspicious of Harley (1707), Marlborough resorted to the doubtful expedient of discussing foreign politics behind the back of Secretary Harley with Whigs who were not even in the ministry.²³ Before we leave the diplomatic aspect of the secretary's office, however, it may be well to indicate a few of the more important problems that Harley faced in the different states which fell within his province.

²¹ Public Record Office, State Papers (Holland), 104/72, fol. 46, October 8, 1706.

²² The following letters indicate the importance of Marlborough, P. R. O., S. P. (Holland), 104/73:

Harley to Stanhope: "In case anything difficult should arise you are to consult the Duke of Marlborough. . . . follow his Grace's directions." Again, "You have the fountain of news where you are; the spring of action, as well as the good genius of success, while the Duke of Marlborough is with you."

²³ Examples of Marlborough's letters to the secretaries are found in *Letters and Despatches of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, 1702-1712*, edited by Sir George Murray, 5 vols. (London, 1845). For examples of Marlborough's ignoring of Harley, see William Coxe, *Memoirs of the Duke of Marlborough, with his Original Correspondence*, third edition, edited by J. Wade ("Bohn's Library"), 3 vols. (London, 1847-48), II, 105, 112, 122, 126.

In the Baltic states during the years 1705-1706, Denmark and Sweden—and to some extent Prussia—were at daggers drawn over the possession of the bishopric of Eutin, or Lubeck. As this threatened to draw Denmark into war and thus cut off the supply of Danish soldiers used by the Duke of Marlborough, Harley, in conjunction with Dutch statesmen, made strenuous efforts to settle the question amicably. The issue dragged on for a year, but the rival claimants were eventually satisfied. The Swedish claimant, the Administrator of Holstein, was given possession of the bishopric, and England and the United Provinces paid Prince Charles of Denmark a large pension as compensation for his renunciation.²⁴

In the secretary's correspondence with Hanover, the main problem, as we have already seen, was to keep the electoral family convinced that the English government was enthusiastic for the Hanoverian succession, and to prevent the intrigues of political busybodies.²⁵

Of all Harley's foreign despatches, those to Austria and to Holland were the most frequent and the most difficult; for troubles and misunderstandings were constantly cropping up between the allies. Ever since the opening of the war, the English had tended to be exasperated with Austrian selfishness, dilatoriness, and pride,²⁶ and this feeling was increased when the emperor made but feeble attempts to pacify the Hungarian insurgents, or embarked on expeditions, like the one to

²⁴ Harley's correspondence on this subject may be found in *Portland MSS.*, IX, 210-238, and *British Diplomatic Instructions, 1689-1789*, Vol. I (Sweden), edited by J. F. Chance ("Camden Society Publications"), third series, Vol. XXXII (London, 1922). In Godfrey Davies' "Letters of Queen Anne to Godolphin," *Scottish Historical Review*, XIX, 194, is a letter of Queen Anne's which shows how much Prince George was interested in the matter. A suggestion was even made that he give Prince Charles one of his Danish estates. From this letter it is evident that Prince Charles received £6,000 as compensation, of which England furnished £4,000, and Holland £2,000.

²⁵ A troublesome Englishman at Hanover was Sir Rowland Gwynne. He wrote public letters to England, accusing Parliament of coldness toward the succession and to Holland. The following is a typical soothing letter written to him by Harley (P. R. O., S. P., Holland, 104/48): "I have been so long acquainted with your zeal for the interest of England, that I cannot but rejoice that you are fixed in a court whence the just expectations of all good Englishmen are so great [in private he bemoaned Gwynne's visit to Godolphin] . . . It is too true there are a great many evil spirits at work, and the extremes of two parties which have so long torn the nation to pieces are studying to expose all moderate councils, and it may be to that end they may unite. . . . The bulk of the nation are so settled in a good opinion of their Majesties, and a resolution to support the Protestant Succession that no disguise will deceive them, and for the other, I hope . . . we shall rather be stricter united to Holland than ever."

²⁶ Henry St. John in a letter to Lord Cutts, October 5, 1705, gave a typical expression of this discontent, Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Manuscripts of Mrs. Frankland-Russell-Astley* (London, 1900), p. 187: "It is insufferable that England and Holland must every day take a greater burden upon them, while the House of Austria . . . seems rather a neuter than a party in the war against France." R. Geikie and Isabell Montgomery, *The Dutch Barrier, 1705-1719* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 31, quotes a letter of Harley to Stepney (1706) which brings out the Austrian provocations: "It is too true that the Emperor's ministers give great occasion to be angry, and their pride is equal to their impotence. Some of their ministers—not Wratislaw, for that would have been no wonder—have written a very impertinent letter which has fallen into Dutch hands, that there were but two powers in Europe, the House of Austria and the House of Bourbon, and that all the rest must attach themselves to one of the two, and a great deal other such peddling politics; and those in Holland are justly provoked at the arrogance of a court which is scarce '*magni nominis umbra*.'"

Naples, from purely dynastic motives. Thus most of Harley's correspondence with Vienna is taken up in efforts to convince that court of the necessity of coming to terms with the Hungarians, and with letters to Sunderland, who was sent out to urge it in person.²⁷

Holland, also, required much of Harley's diplomatic attention. During his secretaryship, relations between the maritime powers were frequently near the breaking point. The barrier, the succession, and peace were big issues, and although actual negotiations were primarily in the hands of Marlborough, Halifax, and Stepney, Harley was deeply interested and tried to keep the States convinced of England's good intentions. He did his best to soothe Dutch feelings, to strengthen their resistance to French peace proposals in 1706, and to remove the ground for trade jealousies by urging in Parliament the revision of certain unpopular customs duties.²⁸ From these brief illustrations of the diplomatic duties of Harley, and of his manners and methods, we may turn to the other sphere of the secretary's activity—namely, his domestic tasks.

In the home and Scottish fields, Harley's work was extremely varied and tends, perhaps, to illustrate his innovating spirit better than does his work in the realm of diplomacy. On the domestic side, the powers which were inherent in the secretary's office were broad and arbitrary. Being in a sense the sovereign's personal servant, the channel of royal prerogative, and having *ex officio* the powers of a conservator of the peace, the secretary of state could (before the days of the legal checks effected later on in the century by the decisions handed down in the cases which arose from the arrest of John Wilkes) commit subjects on suspicion, and seize papers with or without warrant.²⁹ The secretary

²⁷ Harley to Stepney, August 14, 1705 (B. M. Add. MSS, 7059, fol. 77): "I suppose my Lord Sunderland and you will quickly enter upon your negotiation, wherein I wish you all imaginable success; and that those heathen magicians which oppose you may give place to my Lord Sunderland and your superior genius which is so much for the safety as well as honour of the Austrian family."

²⁸ Geikie and Montgomery, *The Dutch Barrier*, gives a good review of Anglo-Dutch problems. See especially pp. 38-89 for Halifax's mission in 1706, to gain recognition for the Hanoverian succession in exchange for a barrier. Disputes arose over Ostend and Dendermonde. Harley's letters to Stepney and Buys are in P. R. O., State Papers (Holland) 104/73. On December 24, 1706, he explained to Buys England's disapproval of the Dutch desire for Ostend, and concludes: "The world is wide enough for us both to trade, the conjunction of our naval strength is our mutual interest, and inseparable friendship with a union of counsels is what only can make both nations secure and formidable."

B. M. Add. MSS, 7065, fol. 17, Harley to Dayrolles, March, 1707: "Tomorrow I hope we shall be able to bring on the consideration of the proposal concerning the duties on Dutch linens. I shall do the best I can. . . ."

Or *Ibid.*, fol. 21: "I mentioned to you before the care that was taken concerning Dutch linens . . . it has laid a foundation of rectifying anything that is really to be complained of in the trade between us and our good allies."

See, also, Onno Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart und die Succession des Hauses Hannover 1660-1714*, 14 vols. (Vienna, 1875-88), XII, 217-22.

²⁹ For these cases see C. Grant Robertson, *Select Statutes, Cases, and Documents* . . . , third edition (London, 1919), pp. 440-55. When the Licensing Act was not renewed, in 1695, the secretary's duties in the supervision of printed matter became more important. Harley was not as harsh in this respect, as was Bolingbroke somewhat later.

had also large powers of censorship, of issuing licenses and passports, of receiving and deciding on petitions addressed to the sovereign, and, in general, the duty "of stayinge the ill affected from evill courses and encourageing ye well affected."³⁰ In addition the secretary was a member of the Board of Trade, administered the oaths of homage to new bishops, and supervised the publication of an official news sheet, the *Gazette*.

As Harley was secretary in time of war, the number of arrests was greater than usual. The record book of commitments in the Public Record Office contains, for the period of his secretaryship, more than a hundred names of those arrested upon his warrant.³¹ All types of offenders are represented, but by far the greatest number were imprisoned under the heading "treasonable correspondence (or practice) with France," or "suspicion of high treason."³² Other common causes of arrest were libel, and going abroad without leave.

An example of Harley's censorship duties may be seen in a letter he received from Henry Compton, Bishop of London, May, 1705:

Her Majesty is informed [wrote the Bishop] that 'Bail's [Bayle's] French Dictionary' is translating into English, in which, it is said, are contained many lewd, obscene, and 'prophane' stories not fit to be mentioned; and therefore she would have you mind her of it the first time you wait upon her, that she may have your advice which way to stop the impression before it comes out.

However, from a later letter of Erasmus Lewis, we gather that the printing was permitted, "provided it be castrated to the Archbishop's satisfaction."³³

The mass of petitions which came through Harley's office was of infinite variety. Some people sought pensions; some, patents or offices; while others wanted royal pardon for offenses which ranged from stealing a lady's petticoat, to murder.³⁴

³⁰ C. Hughes, "Nicholas Faunt's Discourse," *English Historical Review*, XX (1905), 499. For general accounts of the domestic duties of the secretary, see Evans, *Principal Secretary of State*, pp. 270-275; or M. Thomson, *Secretaries of State*, pp. 105-128.

³¹ P. R. O., S. P., 44/77.

³² People arrested on "suspicion of treason," or as spies, were often held several years before being brought to trial. In the *Portland MSS*, IV and VIII, are numerous letters of victims begging Harley for mercy. One man, Le Moine de Brie (committed September 23, 1704, P. R. O., S. P., 44/77, fol. 8) was particularly persistent. He had once been a tutor to Lord Nottingham's children. Among the Hatton-Finch papers (B. M., Add. MSS, 29-589, fols. 459-461) is a letter from Le Moine to Lady Nottingham. He informed her that he was crying to God and mankind "for assistance against Mr. Harley." He explained that he was arrested at Newcastle as a suspect, "newly coming from Scotland, upon the thought of a woman unknown to me." He said that "he declared all to Mr. Harley," but that the secretary was trying to find evidence against Lord Nottingham, and so kept him confined; that he was without fire and candles; and that he had "flung out the windows several representations written in my blood." He was finally tried and freed in 1706. It is remarkable that he immediately offered his services to Harley as a spy (*Portland MSS*, IV, 473).

³³ *Portland MSS*, IV, 179, 182.

³⁴ Many examples of petitions to the secretary are found in the *Portland MSS*, VIII, 318-384, or in P. R. O., S. P., 44/354. An interesting example of a pension seeker was Deborah Clark, youngest and only surviving daughter of the poet John Milton, who asked

The most distinctive feature, however, of Harley's secretaryship, and the characteristic which marked him off from other secretaries of state of his period, was the nature and organization of his "intelligence" system. To Harley, "intelligence" meant more than the employment of the ordinary secret service spies for the discovery of plots and hidden designs. He used spies, of course, in France (the proper field of his colleague), in Scotland, and elsewhere. But to him the word *intelligence* also included the idea of ascertaining public opinion and going beyond that, an attempt to mould it. The two men who best embodied and carried out this ideal were Daniel Defoe and John Toland. A digression is therefore necessary in order to explain the manner in which Harley brought these men into employment and the uses to which he put them.

The story of Defoe's imprisonment (1703) for having written the *Shortest Way with Dissenters* is well known. Even before it occurred, Harley had urged upon Godolphin the advantages of securing "some discreet writer for the Government side, if it were only to state facts right," adding, "For the generality err for want of knowledge, and being imposed upon by ill designing men."³⁵ Here was his writer at hand. By August, 1703, Harley began to interest himself in Defoe's plight, and in September he brought the matter to Godolphin's attention.³⁶ A week later (in the same letter which arranged for meetings of the "triumvirate"), Godolphin replied, "I have taken care of the matter of Defoe."³⁷

Although Defoe was released in the closing weeks of 1703, Harley permitted him to rest, to settle his business—and incidentally, to observe the damage done by the great wind storm—until February, 1704. In that month the *Review* was launched. That famous newspaper defended ministerial views, preached Harleian moderation, and, as we shall observe later, advocated and smoothed the way for the Scottish union. Its success was a tribute to Harley's astuteness and policy, as well as to the untiring energy and ability of Defoe. A rhyming attack on Harley, as

aid, stating that she was in "a very low and destitute condition" (*Portland MSS*, VIII, 383). Richard Bull sought a patent, stating, ". . . that he hath with great pains and expense invented and brought to perfection a new way of roasting coffee . . . which prevents the volatile spirits peculiar to good coffee from evaporating." (P. R. O., S. P., 44/354, fol. 21.)

The petticoat thief was Thomas Lyford, age eighteen. One of the most prominent murderers asking Harley for pardon was John Law, the Scottish financier, who had killed a man in a duel. His petition is endorsed in Harley's hand, "Rejected September 5, 1704." A change in that first word might have altered the financial history of England and France.

³⁵ British Museum, Additional MSS, 28,055, fol. 3.

³⁶ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Eighth Report, with Appendix and Index*, Part I (London, 1881), p. 43. September 20, 1703. Harley wrote: "He is a very capable man and if his fine is satisfied without any other knowledge but that he alone be acquainted with it, that it is the Queen's bounty to him and grace, he may do service and this may perhaps engage him better than after rewards and help keep him more under the power of an obligation."

³⁷ *Portland MSS*, IV, 75.

"the Hon. Innuendo Scribble," written in 1708, described his patronage of Defoe in these terms:

Another scribe about this time
There was, who dealt in verse and rhyme.

But above all the world must say
That prodigy, 'The Shortest Way'
Was for its worth above the rest

Our Monster (Harley), gazing at his ruins
So well adapted to the times,
And highly pleased, in every book
With the bold latitude he took,
Approved him so extremely fit
In principles, as well as wit
To push on his designs, for pay,
To serve his ends, the shortest way;
That he soon found out means to gain
The favour of his useful pen.
Then he was ready at all times,
T' extol the Monster with his rimes.
For crafty climbers never rise
Without their scribbling deputies.

Rimes are as useful to the Great
As Guns and Bells are to the State.³⁸

When Harley became secretary of state, however, he found new uses to make of Defoe. He had the habit of asking his proteges to draw up designs for his perusal.³⁹ He was struck by the originality and usefulness of a "General Scheme of Intelligence" advanced by Defoe, and as elections were approaching, resolved to let him try to lay the foundation for "a settled correspondence with every part of England."⁴⁰ Defoe's first journey was not extensive, but after the exciting election of 1705 he went on another and wider tour of the country for the purpose of "listing all parties exactly," of convincing the Dissenters that Harley stood between them and the malice of the High Church party, and of completing his arrangements for informatory correspondence.⁴¹ These were the chief uses to which Harley put Defoe in England.

³⁸ *The Welsh Monster, or the Rise and Downfall of that late Upstart, the Right Honorable Innuendo Scribble* (London, 1708), p. 26.

³⁹ Harley seems to have tried this method with Greg and Toland. When Harley became secretary, Defoe, in a remarkable document, urged him to aim at supreme power, to become "Prime Minister of State, unenvied and unmolested," and he suggested the steps, adding several Machiavellian maxims. Mr. G. F. Warner discovered this unsigned paper among the Lansdowne MSS, 98, fols. 223-46. It is published in G. F. Warner, "Maxims and Instructions for Ministers of State" (by Daniel Defoe), *English Historical Review*, XXII (1907), 130-143.

⁴⁰ *Portland MSS*, IV, 106. Defoe also suggested the idea in "Maxims and Instructions," *English Historical Review*, XXII (1907), 135.

⁴¹ Defoe began his second trip on July 16, 1705. He left London and went via Reading and Salisbury into "Seymesky's [Sir Charles Seymour's] western empire," of Devon, then northeast through Taunton and Bath to Gloucester and Wales, through the midlands and the eastern counties, and returning to London in November. As a result of this trip many people formed the habit of writing to Harley the opinions of men and events which they heard expressed in their neighborhood. See *Portland MSS*, IV, 213-270, for Defoe's letters.

Like Defoe's, John Toland's connection with Harley began before the latter became secretary of state. Indeed, it dated from the days of Harley's constitutional opposition to William III. At that time Toland, a conceited and opinionated Irishman who had been driven from Ireland because of his deistic book, *Christianity not Mysteriorious*, arrived in England in search of employment. Harley, then the rising hope of the Tories, employed him to edit the republican *Oceana* of Harrington as part of the campaign he was waging against the arbitrary tendencies of William.⁴² Again, in 1701, when Harley was urging the passage of the Act of Settlement, he instructed Toland to write in its defence, and rewarded him with a trip to Hanover.⁴³ The accession of Anne found Toland

a stranger abroad and friendless at home . . . with a Tory secretary of state [Nottingham] writing against him in foreign courts as a Whig agent . . . and certain leading Whigs writing . . . the same princes that he was Mr. Harley's creature, which was a higher crime by far than being a Tory. . . . In the meantime [lamented Toland] I find my conduct to be like that of your coquet ladies who taste all the bitter of scandal without enjoying any of the sweets of sin.⁴⁴

In 1704 he returned to England to renew his acquaintances with Harley and to taste, if possible, the sweets of employment, for his nature and needs made it natural for him to rally to the support of moderation.⁴⁵

It was at this time that the extreme Tories, exasperated by the equivocation of the ministry on their pet measure, the Occasional Conformity Bill, launched their bitter attack against those at the helm of English policy in the famous *Memorial of the Church of England*. Harley thereupon made Toland the official apologist for the government cause, and with his help Toland produced the *Memorial of the State of England*,⁴⁶

⁴² There is no full account of Toland's life. The sketches in the *Dictionary of National Biography* . . . , ed. by Leslie Stephen and S. Lee (Oxford, 1917), and in Isaac Disraeli's *The Calamities and Quarrels of Authors: with Some Inquiries respecting their Moral and Literary Character* . . . , ed. by Right Honourable B. Disraeli (New York, 1870), are both based largely on a brief biography of Toland by Des Maizeaux included in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Toland*, edited with a Life by Des Maizeaux, second edition (London, 1757), cited hereafter as *Collection of Pieces*. Toland's place in theological controversies of the day is discussed in Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1902). The *Portland MSS*, Vols. IV, V, and IX, contain several important letters of Toland to Harley. We may note that Disraeli entitles the chapter devoted to Toland, "Genius and Erudition the Victim of Immoderate Vanity."

⁴³ The sight of royalty and the intellectual charms of Sophia completely captivated Toland, and his main concern became the Hanoverian succession. Toland wrote Harley, "Your lordship appeared for this cause as early as any." (*Collection of Pieces*, II, 231). See Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, IX, 319.

⁴⁴ *Collection of Pieces*, II, 348.

⁴⁵ Toland wrote Harley: "As to my politics I ever was and will be for a free government against what is arbitrary and despotic" (*Collection of Pieces*, II, 337). And again, "I am far from thinking a chief minister should make himself the head of a party" (*Ibid.*, II, 228).

⁴⁶ Its full title was *The Memorial of the State of England, in Vindication of the Queen, the Church, the Administration, designed to rectify the mutual Mistakes of the Protestants and to unite their Affections in Defense of our Religion and Liberty* (London, 1705). It reviewed the leading papers of both parties (pp. 2, 3), defined the high and low church groups (p. 12), and defended moderate bishops. Toland met attacks on the ministry, stressed its toleration (it was now too late to appease the Tories), attacked the discontented as

which defended the administration and pleaded for moderation and toleration. As in all paper wars, each blast resulted in several counter-blasts, so that Toland had to defend his book in several other pamphlets.

The *Memorial* was the most public example of Toland's connection with Harley, but two other phases of his work deserve attention, as they display Harley's schemes and interests. One of the secretary's pet convictions seems to have been that, with suitable guidance and education, a reasonable plan of government could be made popular and acceptable. It was with this in mind that he had encouraged Defoe to start the *Review*. He planned another paper for Toland, which unfortunately never materialized, but which was to have contained many novel features; for example, it was to show men "the beauty, harmony and reasonableness of virtue itself," to be devoted "to the detection of popular errors," to contain "no sham intelligence, no advertisements, but an account of new books in third the space," and finally it was not "to meddle with our factions and parties at home," but to serve the government, "for every man serves a good government who contributes . . . to render the members of it wise and vertuous."⁴⁷ Harley also sent Toland on a secret mission to the courts of Hanover, Dusseldorf, and Berlin to observe the conduct of the English envoys,⁴⁸ but as the secretary fell from power before the mission was completed, Toland never reported his findings.

We now turn to the secretary's relations with Scotland. His work in this field illustrates more clearly, perhaps, than any other of his secretarial duties, his ability, his use of intelligence, and his judgment in the employment of capable men. The zeal he displayed in the conduct of the office in its relations to Scotland, and his effort in behalf of the union are the more remarkable when we consider that at the very beginning of Queen Anne's reign Harley professed abysmal ignorance of northern

traitors (pp. 62-104). He drew a beautifully tinted portrait of Harley: "The Right Honourable Mr. Secretary Harley is not once named or characterized in the *Memorial*, which was not done by our High Flying politicians out of design to render him suspected. For he is so much an Englishman that temerarious and unthinking as they are, they could not hope to make him pass, even with the most credulous of their own implicate herd for a friend of their cause. . . . If they feared to irritate him and to rouse so formidable an adversary their caution . . . is to be commended. For none in the three kingdoms better understands the extent of the people's liberty, the bounds of the Prince's prerogative, and the privileges of Parliament, or the force and terror of our Laws, which with his consummate Literature render him indeed the most capable of any to encounter. . . . But if they had any such foresight as to hope he would become a mediator in their behalf . . . they are again no less to be commended, for in every party he always hated extreams. . . . He has often generously endeavored to bring those of *all sides* to a right understanding and love of the true old English Government, wherefore even those misled . . . churchmen may securely depend upon his good offices, whenever they are so penitent as to deserve, or so wise as to sue for them."

⁴⁷ *Collection of Pieces*, II, 201-213. Toland closed his letter thus: "And now to return to yourself, Sir, Go on as you advised and encouraged me, to cultivate your understanding, to increase your knowledge, to instruct your neighbors and rectify their manners."

⁴⁸ *Portland MSS*, IX, 239.

affairs, once remarking in the house of commons "that he knew no more of Scotch business than of Japan."⁴⁹ Yet unlike his contemporaries he showed a keen desire to understand the situation and to improve relations with that kingdom.⁵⁰

Even before becoming secretary of state Harley was led to take this interest in Scottish affairs, partly because of his close relationship with Godolphin, and partly because he felt that the Hanoverian succession would remain insecure as long as the political status of Scotland with reference to England remained unsettled. His activity in the Scottish field took several forms. From the time of Anne's accession, and perhaps earlier, he cultivated the habit of corresponding with certain of the Scottish leaders, especially with William Carstares, George Leslie, Earl of Leven, John, Earl of Mar, and even with the fickle James Douglas, fourth Duke of Hamilton.⁵¹ He sent agents into Scotland to observe and report to him the deliberations of the Scottish parliaments, particularly after he became secretary of state, so that he might keep check on the partizan information he received from the Scots. On the basis of his correspondence and reports he offered advice to Godolphin and to the Queen, and finally, he himself took a part, as an English Commissioner, in the meetings of 1702 and 1706, in which the provisions for a treaty of union were discussed and at length agreed upon.

Harley's part in the first meeting of the commissioners was a very minor one. Anne's first parliaments in both England and Scotland had passed acts at her suggestion and as a legacy of William III (who had urged the Scottish union in his last speech) empowering commissioners to treat for a union. Harley, as speaker of the house of commons and friend of Marlborough and Godolphin, was an English delegate. Yet of the twenty-three actual meetings in the period of negotiation (November 10, 1702–February 3, 1703) he seems to have attended only four.⁵²

⁴⁹ *Correspondence of George Baillie of Jerviswood, 1702-1708*, edited by Gilbert Elliot, second Earl of Minto (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1842), p. 27 (cited hereafter as *Baillie Correspondence*).

⁵⁰ *State Papers and Letters Addressed to William Carstares . . . Relating to Public Affairs in Great Britain . . .* edited by J. McCormick (Edinburgh, 1774), p. 718 (cited hereafter as *Carstares State Papers*).

⁵¹ Harley placed his greatest confidence in the letters from Carstares. William Carstares, a prominent Scottish divine, had been chaplain to William III. His influence was so great with that monarch that he was called "the cardinal." He met Harley in his frequent sojourns at the English court, and he lived in England from the time of William's death until he was made the principal of Edinburgh University (1703). See Robert H. Story, *William Carstares: a Character and Career of the Revolutionary Epoch* (London, 1874). Many of his letters to Harley have been published in the *Portland MSS*; some are in the *Carstares State Papers*. Each man admired the coolness and moderation of the other. Harley often relayed to Godolphin almost verbatim the pictures of the Scottish situation as portrayed by Carstares, e.g., Carstares's letter to Harley (in *Portland MSS*, VIII, 106) is repeated almost word for word in Harley's letter to Godolphin (in British Museum, Additional MSS, 28,055, fol. 3). Carstares also put Harley in touch with Leven and Mar.

⁵² Harley attended on November 16, 20, 30, and December 14, 1702. P. R. O. State Papers, 34/2.

His absence was due, without doubt, to the fact that the English parliament was meeting simultaneously, and the speaker's presence was in demand there. Some useful agreements were reached, but arguments over church and trade, and the dwindling attendance of the English Tory delegates caused the commission to be adjourned for eight months. It never met again.

In the second attempt at union (1706), Harley's activity was more varied and more effective. By this time he had learned the Scottish situation much more thoroughly, and had seen the storm clouds in the north assume threatening proportions, especially after the Scots had framed their Act of Security and forced its acceptance (1704). Finally, he had observed the ill effects of Godolphin's waverings between the plan of union and that of persuading the Scots to accept the Hanoverian succession. He himself was convinced that union was the final solution. Indeed, statesmen of both countries approached this second attempt at treaty making in a more chastened and determined mood than had been exhibited in 1702.⁵³ In England the elections of 1705 had brought victory for Harleian "moderation," and a parliament slightly Whiggish in tone, hence inclined to favor a union. As a result the threatening bills levelled at Scotland after the passage of their Act of Security were soon repealed,⁵⁴ and the way was thrown open for the commissioners to meet.

As Scotland fixed the number of her commissioners at thirty-one, England chose the same number. The task of selecting the Scottish representatives was put largely in the hands of the Duke of Queensberry and the Earl of Mar,⁵⁵ whereas Godolphin left the choice of the English delegates mainly to Robert Harley.⁵⁶

The English list was completed in April. It has been dubbed "Whiggish," and, indeed, many of the prominent "junto-ists" were included

⁵³ Some Scots undoubtedly backed the measure in 1705 in the belief that union would never succeed, but a strong group considered it the only solution of Scotland's difficulties. See Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar and Kellie, Preserved at Alloa House, N. B.* (London, 1904), pp. 240-250 (cited hereafter as *Mar and Kellie MSS*), and P. Hume Brown, *The Legislative Union of England and Scotland* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 98, 109.

⁵⁴ These were the acts which would have declared the Scots aliens, and have forbidden the importation of Scottish cattle. See Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Union of Great Britain* (London, 1786), p. 91, and Gilbert Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1823), V, 240. Burnet says the Tories moved the repeal of the acts, hoping that the Whigs would oppose it, but that their stratagem failed.

⁵⁵ *Mar and Kellie MSS*, pp. 240-243. The Scottish commissioners were mainly pro-union, for only three later voted against it in the Scottish parliament. One of these was George Lockhart, the Jacobite memoir writer. The Duke of Argyll refused to serve, because the Duke of Hamilton was omitted (contrary to a promise). Many Scots wanted the Marquis of Annandale on their list, but he refused. Sir William Fraser, *The Melvilles, Earls of Melville, and the Leslie, Earls of Leven*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1890), II, 194-195 (cited hereafter as *The Melvilles*); *Mar and Kellie MSS*, pp. 247, 248.

⁵⁶ Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath, at Longleat*, Vol. I (London, 1904), p. 67. Godolphin wrote Harley: "I think you have filled up the blanks very well in the Commission."

(Wharton, Somers, Sunderland, and Halifax), but at the same time many of Harley's moderate followers were on the roll, notably Poulett, Trevor, Boyle, and the Duke of Newcastle. The commissioners first met in joint session on April 16, 1706,⁵⁷ and they completed their deliberations and presented the final articles of the treaty by July 23rd. Harley took an active part in these transactions. As commissioner, he attended the ordinary meetings and presented the English case at the joint session on the delicate subject of the number of Scottish representatives to be allowed in the union parliament.⁵⁸ He was also a member of the important committee which was appointed to investigate the "state of the taxes" in order to determine the amount of the "equivalent" which was to be paid the Scots for accepting English taxation.

In addition to these routine duties, he tried through the Earl of Mar to convince Carstairs that it was best to leave the religious issue out of the treaty.⁵⁹ He also took pains to keep the English envoys and the Dutch pensionary, Buys, informed of England's efforts "to bind the Scots . . . by the benefits they shall enjoy." Even after the treaty was drawn he was forced to urge many of his absentee followers to come up to London to sign it.⁶⁰ Small wonder, then, that in his foreign letters he should write, "when that affair is over I hope I shall have more leisure."⁶¹

In the negotiation of the treaty, Harley, as we have seen, took an active and personal part. In the more difficult task of securing its ratification by the Scottish estates, he was forced to rely, in addition, upon the ability and ingenuity of agents of his choosing. Fortunately, Harley had, early in his secretaryship, formed the habit of sending observers and reporters to Scotland, so that he knew Scottish problems and the types of men needed to deal with them.⁶²

⁵⁷ Care was taken to draw up rules which would expedite business and avoid friction. These were: 1. All proposals in writing. 2. Nothing obligatory until laid before the Queen in final form. 3. A commission was appointed to revise the minutes. 4. Proceedings to be secret. The delegates met separately, and after work began no hospitalities were interchanged. See Defoe, *History of the Union*, pp. 115-116; *Mar and Kellie MSS*, p. 271. The famous scene of the final presentation of the articles to the Queen by Chancellor Seafield and Lord Cowper is commemorated by a fresco in the house of commons.

⁵⁸ Defoe, *History of the Union*, pp. 106, 121, 187. On the basis of population Scotland would have received eighty-five members, while on that of taxation only thirteen. The number of "bonny blewcaps" was finally fixed at forty-five. On this subject Newcastle wrote Harley: "I suppose our pilots, by the hand they have in the present negotiation, hope afterwards to steer these northern vessels."

⁵⁹ *Carstairs State Papers*, p. 750.

⁶⁰ Some of those who were out of town when the treaty was completed were Newcastle, Poulett, and Harcourt. Their deference to Harley is shown by such statements as these: "My heart is so much with you that I shall make no scruple of signing as you do" (Newcastle); or "I am determined to come if you say I must or advise me to it . . . be the prejudice to my affairs never so great." (Harcourt) *Portland MSS*, IV, 315-317.

⁶¹ P. R. O., *State Papers (Holland)*, 104/73. July 5 and 12, 1706.

⁶² Two men who were sent to Scotland prior to 1706 were Alexander Cunningham (1704),

Much of Harley's success in the matter of the ratification of the union resulted from the fact that he made Daniel Defoe his chief instrument for that delicate and dangerous work. Before sending any agents to Scotland Harley had already started pouring oil on the troubled waters of Anglo-Scottish relations. He encouraged Defoe to use the pages of the *Review* to create a favorable sentiment in England toward Scotland and the union.⁶³ He also advised the English Dissenters to urge peace and harmony on their northern brethren, and he had a part, along with Lord Somers, in sending a prominent young English barrister, Barrington Shute, to Scotland "... to encourage the nobility and gentry to fall in with the union."⁶⁴ Then, too, he urged on the English ministers the advisability of making the Duke of Queensberry the lord commissioner for the critical session of 1706, being careful to let the duke know that he favored him, pointing out that it was in the duke's interest to promote union.⁶⁵ Finally, just before the meeting of the Scottish Estates, Harley wrote to his friend Carstares, "making it plain that it was of the highest consequence to the interest of that nation in particular as well as to the island in general that this opportunity should not be lost," while to Leven, Mar, Stair, and even to the refractory Duke of Hamilton—who always addressed Harley as "good mason"—he preached the same gospel.⁶⁶

What Harley sought particularly, however, was frequent and impar-

and William Greg (1705). Greg returned from Denmark in 1704, having been secretary to James Vernon. Harley employed him to observe the session of the Scottish parliament which met under the leadership of the Duke of Argyle. His letters (contained in the *Portland MSS*, IV, 182-246) are penetrating and brief, and give a picture of the violence and intrigue of that session which decided to enter on negotiation for the union. Greg returned to London and was brought into the secretary's office as a clerk, although he wanted to be sent abroad in order to evade creditors. His debt-ridden condition led to his attempt to sell secrets and to the trial which preceded Harley's fall. See Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, VI, 672-4, for Greg's story to the lords.

⁶³ The *Review* concentrated on Scotland for almost three years (1705-1708). See the prefaces which Defoe wrote at the end of each year to accompany the bound volumes of the *Review*, in *Later Stuart Tracts*, with an introduction by George A. Aitken, "An English Garner" (London, 1903), pp. 232-244.

⁶⁴ Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of my own Life, with some Reflections on the Times I have lived in*, ed. J. T. Rutt, 2 vols. (London, 1829), II, 44, 45. Shute was twenty-four at the time. Educated at Utrecht, he was known for his book, *The Rights of Protestant Dissenters* (1704). He was accompanied to Scotland by Christopher Taylor. Calamy says, "they were not a little exposed, and had not the mob been curbed . . . they would have made a very ill hand of it."

⁶⁵ *Portland MSS*, IV, 318, July 23, 1706. From a later letter (August 24), Harley seems to have been slightly rebuffed by the duke, for he ends a rather cryptic letter by saying, "I will learn not to be over officious to do people good against their wills."

⁶⁶ Carstares had certain scruples about the union, but was a great help in moderating the clergy, *Portland MSS*, VIII, 250. For Harley's letter to Leven, see *The Melvilles*, II, 203; for an admonition to Mar, see *Mar and Kellie MSS*, p. 286. He had frequent interchanges with Stair and Hamilton, *Portland MSS*, IV, 342, 348, 359, 379, and *Ibid.*, VIII, 248, 249, 265-69. The last reference is to a long letter of Hamilton's which attempted to explain his stand to Harley. He said that he opposed the union (but not the same succession with England), because he thought "this nation will never swallow it." Again he says: "It is reported that there are troops coming to the borders to make good the votes we pass. God knows if that looks like an agreeable Union." He denied that he encouraged the rabble to riot, but insisted that he did not want the union pushed so rapidly.

tial information from the scene of action. With this in mind he sent John Ogilvie, David Fearn, William Paterson, and Daniel Defoe into Scotland. As Defoe was his outstanding envoy, we may dismiss the others briefly.

John Ogilvie filled the role of the typical spy, and was employed chiefly for the detection of Jacobite plots both on the continent and in Scotland.⁶⁷ Fearn, who had once ridden on a judicial circuit in Scotland, was "a formal fellow . . . very faithful with the Kirk." In his letter recommending himself to Harley he said: "None other can pretend to know the nation so particularly, the people's constitution, tempers, estates, powers and weaknesses; for there is not one county but the proposer had relations and clients in it."⁶⁸ It was, no doubt, because of this intimate knowledge of the country that Harley sent Fearn into Scotland to prepare a list of all "the chief men in each county," annotated as to their military strength, party, religion, and attitude toward the succession. Fearn fulfilled this commission, and also wrote Harley of the proceedings of the estates in a dry, news-letterish manner. Steady rather than brilliant, he seemed quite content with the £5 or £10 per month which he received.⁶⁹

Although William Paterson, Scottish financier and one of the originators of the Bank of England, and of the Darien scheme, had for many years been a friend and to some extent a protege of Harley, his employment at this juncture was not entirely of the secretary's choosing. Paterson's letter to Harley has a different ring from the usual submissive pleas of office seekers.

It was [he wrote] not my business so much as that of the commissioners of both kingdoms to press that I or somebody who understands these things [i.e., finance] should be sent down and have them in charge. . . . Lord Somers and the rest of my friends desire me to speak to you in this matter . . . and that if this is not done, it will be understood to be for want of affection to the union, to me, or to both; and the doing it speedily will be more than twice doing it afterward.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ogilvie (sometimes spelled Ogilby) was a Scottish soldier of fortune who had followed James II and was refused indemnity when he returned to England. His petition to the queen passed through Harley's hands, and the secretary determined to free him for use as a spy. He was sent abroad in 1705, and informed Harley of Nathaniel Hooke's missions to Scotland. His expense accounts were large, for, as he wrote Harley: "If I be at court I must make acquaintances and drink a bottle and eat a dish of meat with those I think proper for my use." He continually pleaded that "bricks cannot be made without straw." In 1707 Harley sent him to Scotland. He resigned when Harley was removed. See *Portland MSS*, VIII, 319 (for petition), and *Ibid.*, IV, 170-223, 259, 298, 308, 479.

⁶⁸ *Portland MSS*, IV, 421; *Ibid.*, VIII, 196.

⁶⁹ *Portland MSS*, VIII, 202-208 for his annotated list. Other letters may be found in *Portland MSS*, IV, 397, 399, 401.

⁷⁰ *Portland MSS*, VIII, 243. Paterson to Harley, August 25, 1706. For further details of Paterson's life see, Saxe Bannister, *William Paterson, the Merchant Statesman and Founder of the Bank of England: His Life and Trials* (Edinburgh, 1858).

This makes it evident that Lord Somers and the Whig unionists were in a position to see that Paterson was employed. Harley had no aversion to the use of this "financial expert" and sent him to Scotland where he took an active part in the lengthy committee meetings on taxes, "drawbacks," and the "equivalent." He reported on these transactions and on the activity of parliament in a somewhat perfunctory manner, so that we may consider him less the agent of Harley than of the Junto.⁷¹

Harley's "key man" in Scotland was Defoe. There is some indication that the secretary once planned to send him to the continent in 1706, then changed his mind and decided to make use of his moderating influence and powers of observation in the northern kingdom. During the month of August Harley broached the subject of the trip to Defoe. By the thirteenth of September it is clear, from Defoe's answer, that he was equipped and ready to start.⁷² Characteristically, Harley delayed sending instructions until Defoe, "as Abraham, went cheerfully out not knowing whither he went." But being a man of infinite resource he drew up an outline of his objectives and submitted them to the secretary. They were clear and succinct:

1. To inform myself of the measures taking, or parties forming against the union, and apply myself to prevent them.
2. In conversation and by all reasonable methods to dispose people's minds to the union.
3. By writing and discourse, to answer any objections, libels, or reflections on the union, the English, the court, relating to the union.
4. To remove jealousies and uneasiness of people about secret designs here against the Kirk.

To make smooth the path of union was the thing uppermost in his thoughts, and no doubt conversations with Harley had given him an indication of what was expected of him. By September 22, Defoe reached Leicester, and on the 30th he was at Newcastle, where he met Mr. Bell, postmaster of that place, from whom he received the meagre financial grants sent by Harley. Here also he received instructions which filled in the gaps left in Defoe's own paper. These were, briefly, (a) to disguise all connection with the ministry, (b) "to write constantly the true state, how you find things, at least once a week," and (c) to convince the people with whom he came in contact that the English ministers were "sincere and hearty for the union."⁷³ Harley had had sufficient

⁷¹ *Portland MSS*, VIII, 251-303. Defoe had a very low opinion of Paterson's work in Scotland. He wrote Harley: "That gentleman is full of calculates (sic), figures, and unperforming numbers, but I see nothing he has done here, nor does anybody else speak of him but in terms I care not to repeat." (*Portland MSS*, IV, 358.)

⁷² *Portland MSS*, IV, 327.

⁷³ *Portland MSS*, IV, 334. That there was a real need for this last point is evident from the correspondence of James Johnston, a Scot who resided at the English court, who was

experience with this remarkable man to know that he was master of improvisation, and wisely left him to his own initiative. Indeed, the way in which Defoe could appreciate the difficulties of a situation and construct plans for meeting them marks him out as an original genius and puts him in a different category from the Gregs, Fearnases, or other agents who preceded or accompanied him.

Thus from October, 1706, until Defoe returned to England almost two years later, Harley continued to receive letters from his agent, oftentimes as many as three a week when exciting events were in progress. Had he been on the spot, Harley could scarcely have gained a more vivid impression of the intensity of feeling, the excitement of action, and of the motives and interests of the champions for and against the union. So fascinating, in fact, are these letters that one is tempted to follow the course of events as described by Defoe's pen, but we must limit ourselves to a summary of his activities.

The pamphleteer-agent began his work in a truly Jesuitical manner by being, as he said, "all to everyone that I may gain some."⁷⁴ He had "faithful emissaries in every company" and concentrated his first efforts on soothing the Scottish Presbyterians.

I work incessantly with them [he wrote Harley], they go from me seemingly satisfied and pretend to be informed, but are the same men when they come among their parties. . . . In general they are the wisest weak men, the falsest honest men and the steadiest unsettled people ever I met with.⁷⁵

The Presbyterian clergy were naturally perturbed at the prospect of an "unholy alliance" with the Church of England, and at the imposition of oaths and sacramental tests. Thus Defoe attended church gatherings and assemblies and wrote soothing answers to their inflammatory pamphlets.⁷⁶

continually warning his friends "that Harley is certainly against the Union." He also accused Godolphin of lukewarmness, but his letters are remarkable for their continual change of opinion. *Baillie Correspondence*, pp. 169 ff.

⁷⁴ Defoe's letters from Scotland are in *Portland MSS*, IV, 326-461. He elaborated on the above statement in these words:

"I talk to everybody in their own way, to the merchants I am about to settle here in trade . . . with the lawyers I want to purchase a house and land to bring my family. . . . Today I am going into partnership with a member of parliament . . . tomorrow with another in a salt work . . . with the Glasgow mutineers I am to be a fish merchant . . . and still at the end of all discourse the union is essential" (*Ibid.*, IV, 358).

⁷⁵ *Portland MSS*, IV, 340. He also called them a "hardened, refractory, and terrible people."

⁷⁶ *Catalogue of the Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed . . . by Alfred Morrison*, 5 vols., edited by A. W. Thibaudeau (London, 1883-92), II, 12; *Portland MSS*, IV, 395. Defoe wrote several tracts and planned others, but he suppressed the bitter ones as he considered "my business here was peace, reconciliation, and temper." His longest book was *A Short View of the State of the Protestant Religion in Britain, as it is Professed by the Episcopal Church in England, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and the Dissenters in Both*. Of this book Defoe wrote: "This has gotten me a complete victory [i.e., over his opponent, Webster], and the moderate men of the clergy come every

Defoe also found time to attend numerous committee meetings which were called by the parliament to investigate the financial aspects of the articles of union, and he proved instrumental in convincing Harley of the necessity of allowing certain small changes, particularly in the articles which dealt with the excise on salt and small beer.⁷⁷

The third aspect of Defoe's great service to the secretary and to the union was the considerable part he took in thwarting an intended rising in November, 1706. A plot had been formed by certain Jacobites to unite the western Cameronians (a band of fanatical Presbyterians from Dumfries and Glasgow), with some of the Duke of Hamilton's men from Sterling and Hamilton. These were to meet and join with some highlanders who were already in Edinburgh, for the purpose of breaking up the parliament. Defoe, by employing John Ker of Kersland to go among the Cameronians, foiled the plot; for Ker persuaded the leaders of the folly of the undertaking and calmed their overwrought religious zeal.⁷⁸ By the end of December, when the danger of the rising had subsided, the union was well on the road to completion.

On January 2, 1707, Defoe wrote Harley, "The Union proceeds apace," and asked that "if nothing better can be found I could wish you will please to settle me here after the Union." Harley was more than willing to accede to this request; so Defoe lingered on in Scotland for another year, writing conciliatory articles for the *Review*, collecting materials for his great *History of the Union*, and keeping the secretary informed of the movements which threatened to disrupt the union during its first year of existence.

During these last days of the Scottish parliament Harley too was active. He renewed his appeals to Carstares and to Leven to urge moderation on the Kirk, making free use of the scripture in his condemnation of the zealots and in his praise of the work of his correspondents.⁷⁹ He exerted pressure on the Duke of Hamilton, he recalled

day to thank me for it" (*Portland MSS*, IV, 395). Defoe defended the proceedings of the Kirk in the *Review*, "not that I like them, but to check the ill use that will be made of it in England" (*Ibid.*, IV, 352).

⁷⁷ *Portland MSS*, IV, 346, 348, 354.

⁷⁸ Scottish historians are not agreed as to the existence of this "plot" of November. I agree with Mr. Andrew Lang in accepting it, and in believing that Defoe's spy, J. Pierce, (to whom he refers in *Portland MSS*, IV, 362, 372, 374, 528) was an alias for John Ker. See Andrew Lang, *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation* (London, 1900-07), IV, 127-132; also *The Memoirs of John Ker of Kersland, in North Britain, Esq. Containing his Secret Transactions and Negotiations in Scotland, England . . . and other Foreign Parts*. 2 vols. (London, 1726), I, 12-62.

⁷⁹ *Carstares State Papers*, 757-58. *The Melvilles*, II, 208-09. Leven, like Harley, had observers in the country: e.g., "I have always twice a week accounts from the country and have people there to observe what's doing" (*Portland MSS*, IV, 381). Harley wrote to Leven about the Kirk as follows:

Ogilvie from the continent to go to Scotland to watch the Jacobite activities, and he attempted to discover and guard against Dutch intrigues against the union.⁸⁰ On January 16, 1707, Queensberry "touched" the treaty as finally ratified by the Scottish estates. The next month it passed the English parliament. Unfortunately, Mr. Secretary Harley, who had done so much to bring about the union, lay ill at the time of its completion.

. With this glimpse of Harley's activity in advancing the Scottish union, we must conclude our study of his conduct of office. We have attempted to show that he was not, as many have affirmed, altogether devoid of good qualities in this respect. Indeed, the conditions which permitted the treason of Greg (which brought to Harley exceedingly unfavorable attention) were due rather to the lax way in which the office was conducted in the eighteenth century, than to any particular inefficiency on Harley's part. In certain respects, namely, in his conception and use of intelligence, and in his work for the union, Harley proved a truly constructive secretary. Even in the routine performance of his secretarial duties he displayed the same qualities of moderation, tact, and ability to judge men which were so conspicuous in his parliamentary life. Thus we may say that although he was an example of the "political,"⁸¹ in contrast to the "career" or civil servant type of secretary, his conduct illustrates the fact that the politician's qualities may serve the secretary, even as secretarial functions could aid the politician.

"I have named the mistaken zeal of the church in the last place, because it gives me a very particular concern to see those who profess to be the ministers of the gospel breaking the positive laws of our ever blessed Redeemer and acting the parts of Jewish zealots, so much declared against by Peter, James and Jude in their epistles, instead of being clothed with humility . . . and this to please the enemies of their constitution and discipline in opposition to their true friends and adherents."

⁸⁰ P. R. O., State Papers (Holland), 104-73, Harley to Stepney, December 27, 1706.

⁸¹ Thomson, *Secretaries of State*, p. 23, says, "Harley was perhaps the first secretary to be appointed solely for his parliamentary ability."